

## Exchange With Reporters in Hot Springs, Arkansas July 23, 1994

### *High School Vietnam Memorial*

Q. [Inaudible]

*The President.* Yes, very proud. And I'm grateful to all the people who worked on it and made it possible. I'm glad some of my closest friends could be here on the day it was unveiled and dedicated. I'm grateful to them, all the people who did all this work. You know it really means a lot to me because I haven't been able to be here or be a part of it. So I'm really happy about it.

### *The Presidency*

Q. Do you wish you could just be here for a long period of time?

*The President.* Absolutely. I get very homesick, homesick for my friends and for the place and also for the ability to communicate directly with people. You know, it's very frustrating. It's hard to avoid being isolated, and it's hard to avoid just kind of a distance and almost a miscommunication from the nature of the Presidency, where so many things are happening at once and so many things are cascading in on people and so much information is flying back and forth and occasionally misinformation. I miss the whole lifestyle that Hillary and Chelsea and I had down here.

But we're doing fine, and I feel good about what's happening to the country. We got the economy going back in order; we're facing a lot of our serious problems. I think the crime bill will pass soon. It'll be the most important crime bill in history. We're taking up health care—for the first time in the history of the country we've ever even considered providing health care to all Americans—on the floor of both Houses of the Congress. So I'm very happy about what's going on.

And things are going pretty well in the world. We've got our problems, to be sure, but we're working, trying to work to avoid a crisis in North Korea. We've got peace in the Middle East developing. The trip to Europe went very well. So I feel good about where we are in the world as we move toward the 21st century. And I feel very good about the fact that we're being able to change some things here at home and

are being able to face some of our problems. So I feel good about it.

### *Whitewater Hearings*

Q. One of the editors of your home State paper, the Arkansas Gazette, has said that the upcoming Whitewater hearings could, in his view, undermine your Presidency. Would you give us a reading of those hearings that are to start next week—

*The President.* Well, first of all, if my home State paper were the Arkansas Gazette, I don't believe that opinion would be in there. [Laughter]

The hearings, I think, will go about the way the Special Counsel's inquiry did. After all, we've got a lifelong Republican that is the Special Counsel. And he concluded that there was no legal violation in any way, shape, or form in all these contacts. He concluded that Vince Foster's death was a suicide and that all these hysterical, politically motivated efforts to twist it into something else were wrong. And the ethics counsels of various departments, many of them are lifetime Republicans, too. I feel quite comfortable that the hearings will be seen as just a rehash of what's already been looked into in detail.

Q. Are you—[inaudible]—campaign getting in full swing for the fall? Is that bad timing for Whitewater hearings?

*The President.* No, the question—I think the American people are going to wonder why the Congress is spending so much time and money on something that has already been looked into in great detail, excruciating detail, at great cost to the taxpayers by the Special Counsel. But if they want to do it, that's fine. We'll cooperate just as we have with the Special Counsel.

I think the most important thing is that the Congress be seen as dealing with the problems of the country and that this not be seen as distracting from their obligations to deal with crime and health care, expanding trade, and the other important things that will affect the lives of the American people. All of us need to turn our attention every day as much as we can away from politics and toward the interests of the ordinary American citizen. And I think if we do that, I think we'll be all right.

*Rwanda*

Q. [Inaudible]—help Rwanda?

*The President.* Well, I think—yesterday I think we answered that. The United States has provided 40 percent of the total aid to Rwanda to date. And we have been working on this for 2 months, and we are doing the best we can. But we're going to do more.

I think if you look at the record, I think it's very difficult to point the finger at anyone. It's a very tragic thing which has happened there. The previous government slaughtered large numbers of people, and so those who survived fled. And now the war is over in Rwanda, and the present winners of that conflict are trying to persuade the Rwandans to return. That is the ultimate answer.

But this is a horrible humanitarian tragedy of massive proportions. And I think now is the time, again, to concentrate on those people there and what we as Americans and as citizens of the world can do to keep as many of them alive as possible and to get them to come home under safe conditions.

And when that is over, when the crisis has passed, there will be plenty of time for the critics to point the finger and time for rational assessment if something more could have been done at some different date. But I'm confident. We've been working since May, and I have done all I knew to do. When the crisis has passed and somebody thinks there is something else I should have done, there will be time then to assess that.

*Arkansas Gubernatorial Race*

Q. Any words for Governor Tucker against your old nemesis, Sheffield Nelson, in the Governor's race this year?

*The President.* Well, I think he's done a very good job as Governor. And I think the people of Arkansas know that. And they don't need my help to figure out what to do. You know, I vote here in this State, and I'm a citizen of this State, and I certainly intend to vote for him. But I think—I don't need to get involved in that. He knows what to do. He's done a good job as Governor, he's doing a good job as a candidate, and I think he'll do just fine.

*Hillary and Chelsea Clinton*

Q. How's Chelsea doing?

*The President.* She's doing very well, thank you. She's had a good year in school; she had a wonderful summer with us. She went to Europe with us on this last trip, and it was quite wonderful for her. And so I'm really happy.

Like me, she misses her friends here. She just got home last night. She and her grandmother went to Europe together, and they're coming home to Arkansas next week. So Chelsea is going to have a chance to spend some time here, too, and she's real happy about that.

Q. What about Hillary? Is she with you this weekend?

*The President.* No, because she's out pushing health care. And Chelsea's been gone for a couple of weeks, so we try never to be gone at the same time, you know, so one of us is always there with her. So I stayed last night to see Chelsea come home from Europe, and we stayed up real late last night talking about her trip. And then Hillary's coming home today so she can be with Chelsea this weekend while I'm here, and Chelsea will be here next week.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:15 a.m. at Memorial Field. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

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*President's High School Reunion*

Q. What are your thoughts as you return to the State, Mr. President?

*The President.* I'm very happy to be—I'm gratified that I can be here. So many of my classmates and I have survived these last 30

years in reasonably good shape. We're here together; we're having a wonderful time. We just did a lot of reminiscing. I got to go through the high school and see some of the wonderful new things that are being done at the technology